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## Don't let a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration lead to disaster. Fireworks safety tips for Independence Day.



For many people, Fourth-of-July festivities aren't complete without a few sparklers or a big, brilliant fireworks display. But if you don't leave the explosives to the professionals, your party or barbecue could end in tragedy.

According to estimates from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, fireworks and other celebratory-combustion or explosive devices result in approximately 11,000 hospital-treated injuries. Fireworks also caused an estimated 32,300 fires per year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

### Beautiful but dangerous!

Most of these accidents, which mainly injure the hands, eyes, head, and face, occur in the one-month period around the July 4th holiday. Children under 15 suffer almost half of these injuries, and many victims are innocent bystanders, rather than the person lighting the fuse.

**What goes wrong might surprise you.** There are the obvious problems that result when the person setting off the fireworks is careless. But even the most careful revelers can face mishaps resulting from faulty firecrackers, premature or delayed explosions, errant flight paths, unexpected gusts of wind that can topple fireworks, and spewing sparks or debris.

Some of you may remember a local accident that injured a dozen people two years ago in Vienna, Virginia during the July 4th fireworks show. Vienna is still facing a \$2 million lawsuit over injuries from that 2007 accident during the fireworks show, when a mortar round malfunctioned and flew into the crowd. Last year, the town settled for a laser light show on the Fourth of July, but this year the pyrotechnics are back.

So this July 4th, WRS reminds you, wherever you choose to celebrate, **SAFETY FIRST!**

### Some additional recommendations:

- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Sparklers, which many people assume are safe, can burn at 2,000°F (hot enough to melt gold), can ignite clothing, and have been identified as the most common cause of firework-related injuries among children under 5.
- Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.
- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place. Check instructions for special storage directions.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.

*Freedom lives in the hearts, actions and spirit of the citizens of our great nation. This 4th of July, we are grateful for those freedoms as we offer both veterans and those currently serving in the military our deepest gratitude.*

